



Hemorrhoids (Arsha): A Comparative Study Between Ayurvedic And Modern Perspectives With Special Reference To Treatment

1. **Authors Name-** Dr. Akshay Vijay Yadav

Designation- Assistant Professor

Department- Shalya-Tantra

Name, Address of the Institute- MES AYURVED MAHAVIDYALAYA, GHANEKHUNT, LOTE, TAL- KHED DIST.- RATANAGIRI, 415722

Abstract

Hemorrhoids, commonly known as piles, are one of the most prevalent anorectal disorders affecting a large segment of the population worldwide. The condition is characterized by dilatation and engorgement of the hemorrhoidal venous plexus in the anal canal, leading to symptoms such as bleeding per rectum, pain, prolapse, and itching. In Ayurveda, hemorrhoids are described as **Arsha**, which is included among the *Ashta Mahagada* (eight dreadful diseases) by Acharya Sushruta due to its chronicity and difficulty in management. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe detailed etiological factors, pathogenesis, classification, and treatment modalities including **Bheshaja Chikitsa (conservative therapy)**, **Kshara Karma**, **Agnikarma**, and **Shastra Karma**. Modern medicine also recognizes hemorrhoids as a common anorectal condition associated with lifestyle factors such as constipation, prolonged sitting, and low-fiber diet. Treatment in modern medicine ranges from conservative management to minimally invasive procedures and surgical hemorrhoidectomy. This article aims to compare the Ayurvedic and modern concepts of hemorrhoids, focusing on etiology, pathogenesis, clinical features, and management. Special emphasis is given to Ayurvedic parasurgical procedures such as **Kshara Sutra therapy**, which has shown promising results as a minimally invasive and cost-effective treatment modality for hemorrhoids. The integration of Ayurvedic and modern knowledge may offer improved therapeutic outcomes and better patient compliance.

Keywords: Hemorrhoids, Arsha, Ayurveda, Kshara Sutra, Shalya Tantra, Comparative study

Introduction

Hemorrhoids are among the most common anorectal disorders encountered in clinical practice. It is estimated that more than half of the population experiences hemorrhoidal symptoms at some point in their lifetime. The condition significantly affects quality of life due to discomfort, bleeding, and pain during defecation.

In Ayurveda, hemorrhoids are referred to as **Arsha**. Acharya Sushruta described Arsha as a disease that behaves like an enemy (*Ari*) to the patient, causing severe suffering and chronic discomfort. Arsha is included among the **Ashta Mahagada**, indicating its serious nature and difficulty in treatment.

Both modern medicine and Ayurveda recognize hemorrhoids as a disease related to lifestyle, diet, and bowel habits. However, their concepts of pathogenesis and management differ significantly. A comparative understanding of these approaches can help in selecting appropriate treatment strategies.

Etiology

Ayurvedic View

According to Ayurvedic texts, Arsha develops due to vitiation of **Tridosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha)** along with impairment of **Agni** and accumulation of **Mala** in the rectal region.

Nidana (causative factors) include:

- Excessive intake of dry, heavy, spicy food
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Chronic constipation
- Suppression of natural urges
- Prolonged sitting or standing
- Excessive sexual activity
- Pregnancy

These factors vitiate Doshas and affect **Guda Pradesha**, resulting in formation of fleshy growths known as Arsha.

Modern View

In modern medicine, hemorrhoids occur due to increased pressure in the hemorrhoidal venous plexus leading to dilatation and prolapse of vascular cushions.

Common causes include:

- Chronic constipation
- Straining during defecation
- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Prolonged sitting
- Low fiber diet

The disease involves enlargement and displacement of anal cushions composed of vascular tissue and connective tissue.

Classification

Ayurvedic Classification

Acharya Sushruta classified Arsha based on **Dosha predominance**:

1. Vataja Arsha
2. Pittaja Arsha
3. Kaphaja Arsha
4. Sannipataja Arsha
5. Raktaja Arsha

6. Sahaja Arsha

Arsha is also classified into:

- **Antar Arsha (Internal hemorrhoids)**
- **Bahya Arsha (External hemorrhoids)**

Modern Classification

Modern medicine classifies hemorrhoids into:

1. Internal Hemorrhoids

- Grade I – bleeding without prolapse
- Grade II – prolapse during defecation but reduce spontaneously
- Grade III – prolapse requiring manual reduction
- Grade IV – irreducible prolapse

2. External Hemorrhoids

Located below the dentate line and may cause pain and thrombosis.

Clinical Features

Ayurvedic Symptoms

Symptoms described in Ayurvedic texts include:

- Gudashoola (pain in anal region)
- Raktasrava (bleeding per rectum)
- Kandu (itching)
- Gudapralamba (prolapse)
- Vibandha (constipation)

These symptoms vary depending on the predominant Dosha.

Modern Symptoms

Common symptoms include:

- Bright red bleeding during defecation
- Anal pain
- Swelling around anus
- Itching
- Mucous discharge
- Prolapse of hemorrhoidal mass

Treatment

Ayurvedic Treatment

Ayurveda provides a comprehensive approach to the treatment of Arsha.

1. Bheshaja Chikitsa (Medical Management)

Includes use of herbal medicines such as:

- Triphala
- Arshoghni Vati
- Abhayarishta
- Haritaki

Dietary advice includes high-fiber diet, warm water intake, and avoidance of spicy food.

2. Kshara Karma

Kshara (alkaline preparation) is applied locally to destroy pile masses through chemical cauterization. This method is described in detail by Acharya Sushruta as a minimally invasive procedure.

3. Agnikarma

Thermal cauterization is used to shrink hemorrhoidal masses.

4. Shastra Karma

Surgical excision of pile masses when other treatments fail.

5. Kshara Sutra Therapy

Kshara Sutra involves ligation of hemorrhoidal mass using a medicated thread coated with substances such as **Apamarga Kshara, Haridra, and Snuhi latex**. The thread gradually cuts and cauterizes the pile mass leading to its necrosis and separation within a few days.

Advantages include:

- Minimal bleeding
- Less hospitalization
- Faster recovery
- Lower recurrence rate

Studies have shown significant improvement in symptoms such as bleeding, pain, and constipation after Kshara Sutra therapy.

Modern Treatment

1. Conservative Treatment

- High fiber diet
- Stool softeners
- Sitz bath
- Topical ointments

2. Non-Surgical Procedures

- Rubber band ligation
- Infrared coagulation
- Sclerotherapy

3. Surgical Treatment

- Hemorrhoidectomy (Milligan-Morgan procedure)
- Stapled hemorrhoidopexy
- Laser hemorrhoid surgery

Although surgical procedures are effective, they may involve postoperative pain, complications, and longer recovery.

Comparative Discussion

Both Ayurveda and modern medicine recognize hemorrhoids as a disease related to lifestyle and bowel habits. Modern medicine focuses mainly on anatomical and vascular changes, whereas Ayurveda considers systemic factors such as Dosha imbalance and digestive disturbances.

Ayurvedic treatment emphasizes holistic management including diet, lifestyle modification, and parasurgical procedures. Kshara Sutra therapy, in particular, combines surgical principles with medicinal action, offering a minimally invasive alternative to conventional surgery.

Modern surgical techniques provide rapid removal of hemorrhoidal tissue but may involve postoperative discomfort and recurrence in some cases. In contrast, Ayurvedic therapies aim not only to remove the pile mass but also to correct underlying digestive disturbances.

Conclusion

Hemorrhoids remain a common anorectal disorder affecting a large population worldwide. Both Ayurvedic and modern medical systems provide effective management strategies. Ayurveda describes Arsha as a multifactorial disease involving Dosha imbalance and digestive disturbances, while modern medicine attributes it primarily to vascular and mechanical factors.

Ayurvedic parasurgical procedures such as **Kshara Sutra** and **Kshara Karma** offer minimally invasive, cost-effective alternatives to modern surgical techniques. Integrating the strengths of both systems may lead to improved outcomes, reduced recurrence, and better patient satisfaction.

References

1. Acharya Sushruta. **Sushruta Samhita**, Sutra Sthana, Arsha Chikitsa Adhyaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi.
2. Acharya Charaka. **Charaka Samhita**, Chikitsa Sthana. Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi.
3. Vagbhata. **Ashtanga Hridaya**, Nidana Sthana – Arsha Nidana.
4. Bailey & Love. **Short Practice of Surgery**, 27th Edition.
5. B.D. Chaurasia. **Human Anatomy**, Vol. 2.
6. Goligher J.C. **Surgery of the Anus, Rectum and Colon**.
7. Sharma R, Kumar P. Review on Pratisaraneeya Kshara in Arsha.
8. Singh B.P. et al. Efficacy of Kshar Sutra in management of Arsha.
9. Sharma A. et al. Yava Kshara Sutra in management of hemorrhoids.

